

REMARKS

The Office Action rejects claims 1-31 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Haynes (US patent publication 2005/0261986) in view of Kolls (US patent 6389337).

Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite a computer-implemented method of matching vehicle ratings to rental equipment using a central database comprising the steps of storing vehicle information and rental equipment information in the central database, providing a website for a user to specify a description of a vehicle, retrieving the vehicle information from the central database based on the description of the vehicle as specified by the user, searching the central database based on the vehicle information retrieved from the central database to identify rental equipment in the central database which is compatible with the user-specified vehicle by a computer-implemented comparison of the rental equipment information to the vehicle information, wherein the computer-implemented method selects the rental equipment based on compatible attributes between the rental equipment information and vehicle information, including height of the vehicle and hitch assembly, length and width of the vehicle, weight ratio, electrical wiring harness, ground clearance, engine size, drive configuration, wheel base, towing capacity, and displaying the compatible rental equipment on the website.

The Haynes reference is directed toward an online truck rental and reservation system. The system can be accessed by the user via the Internet. Program modules access memory that stores data sets relating to (a) trucks which can be rented and associated rental prices for the trucks, (b) towing accessories

that can be rented and towed vehicles with which the towing accessories can be used, (c) towing accessories and associated rental prices for the towing accessories, (d) expertise-based guidance relating to trucks, and (e) expertise-based guidance relating to towing accessories. The program modules may also access the information on the towability of a vehicle from a towing table 34. The towing table may store data structures, as shown in FIG. 30, for retaining vehicle information, such as the sample towability records for specific vehicles shown in FIGS. 31A-31C which use data codes and comments shown in FIG. 32 for providing towability advice.

Through an Internet access, a user selects equipment including a selection of a truck for rental and a selection of a vehicle type for towing by the selected truck. In response to the user selections, the server 12 accesses the towing table 34 to determine if the selected vehicle is capable of being towed by the selected truck, and to generate a towing advice indication to the user as to whether the selected truck is appropriate for towing the selected vehicle, with such towing advice indications being sent to the user's computer, see paragraphs [0054]-[0059] and FIGs. 30, 31A-31C, 32.

The present invention is structured and implemented quite differently than the Haynes' rental and reservation system. The Haynes system requires the user to enter substantially all vehicle and rental equipment information and then checks a lookup table for compatibility. The present invention asks for only minimal information from the user, i.e. description of the vehicle (make, model, year), and then searches the central database to identify rental equipment and notify the user of compatible choices and options.

There are multiple distinguishing features of the present invention over the Haynes reference. For example, the Haynes reference does not teach or suggest retrieving the vehicle information from the central database based on the description of the vehicle as specified by the user. In Haynes, the vehicle information is supplied by the user, see paragraph [0059]. In contrast, the present invention receives merely a description of the vehicle and then retrieves the vehicle information that will actually be used in the computer-implemented comparison with the rental equipment information. The present invention requires significantly less hard technical information from the user; it is more user-friendly.

The Haynes reference further does not teach or suggest searching the central database based on the vehicle information retrieved from the central database to identify rental equipment in the central database which is compatible with the vehicle by a computer-implemented comparison of the rental equipment information to the vehicle information. The computer-implemented method selects the rental equipment based on compatible attributes between the rental equipment information and vehicle information, including height of the vehicle and hitch assembly, length and width of the vehicle, weight ratio, electrical wiring harness, ground clearance, engine size, drive configuration, wheel base, and towing capacity. Haynes requires the user to select both the truck and rental equipment. Haynes then does a table lookup to see if the selected items are compatible.

In contrast to the Haynes reference, the present invention simplifies the rental process for the user by asking only for a basic description of the tow vehicle. The computer-implement method then assumes the task of searching the central database

based on the description of the vehicle to retrieve the more expansive vehicle information, which is then used to identify rental equipment in the central database which is compatible with the vehicle as specified by the user. The compatibility is determined by a computer-implemented comparison of the rental equipment information to the vehicle information. The computer-implemented method selects the rental equipment based on compatible attributes between the rental equipment information and vehicle information. Those attributes include consideration of the height of the vehicle and hitch assembly, length and width of the vehicle, weight ratio, electrical wiring harness, ground clearance, engine size, drive configuration, wheel base, and towing capacity. Haynes has no such feature. The Haynes reference does only a table lookup between user-selected vehicle and equipment options. If there is no match, the user of the Haynes system must select again. The present invention's computer-implemented search removes that guesswork and returns known good compatible matches to the vehicle description.

The Kolls reference does not address the shortcomings of the Haynes reference to render claim 1 obvious. The above distinctions are not found in Kolls.

Therefore, claim 1 is believed to patentably distinguish over the Haynes and Kolls references, taken singularly or in combination. Claims 2-9 are believed to be in condition for allowance as each is dependent from an allowable base claim.

Applicant has amended claim 10 to recite a computer-implemented method of matching vehicle information to equipment, comprising the steps of receiving a description of a vehicle from a user, searching a central database based on the description of the vehicle to identify equipment in the central database which

is compatible with the vehicle by a computer-implemented comparison of the equipment to the vehicle information, wherein the computer-implemented method selects the equipment based on compatible attributes between the equipment and vehicle information, including at least one attribute from the group consisting of height of the vehicle and hitch assembly, length and width of the vehicle, weight ratio, electrical wiring harness, ground clearance, engine size, drive configuration, wheel base, towing capacity, and sending a listing of the compatible equipment to the user.

The Haynes reference at least does not teach or suggest the step of searching a central database based on the description of the vehicle to identify equipment in the central database which is compatible with the vehicle by a computer-implemented comparison of the equipment to the vehicle information. The computer-implemented method selects the equipment based on compatible attributes between the equipment and vehicle information. At least one attribute is taken from the group consisting of height of the vehicle and hitch assembly, length and width of the vehicle, weight ratio, electrical wiring harness, ground clearance, engine size, drive configuration, wheel base, and towing capacity. The Haynes reference requires the user to select both the vehicle and equipment. Haynes does not search any central database based on the description of the vehicle to identify equipment in the central database which is compatible with the vehicle. Haynes does not consider any computer-implemented comparison of the equipment to the vehicle information. Haynes certainly does not disclose any computer-implemented method which selects the equipment based on the given

compatible attributes between the equipment and vehicle information.

The Kolls reference does not address the shortcomings of the Haynes reference to render claim 10 obvious. The above distinctions are not found in Kolls.

Therefore, claim 10 is believed to patentably distinguish over the Haynes and Kolls references, taken singularly or in combination. Claims 11-20 are believed to be in condition for allowance as each is dependent from an allowable base claim.

Applicant has amended claim 21 to recite a computer-implemented method of matching a vehicle with rental equipment, comprising the steps of storing vehicle information and rental equipment information in a central database, receiving a description of a vehicle from a website, retrieving the vehicle information from the central database based on the description of the vehicle, searching the central database based on the vehicle information retrieved from the central database to identify rental equipment which is compatible with the vehicle by a computer-implemented comparison of the rental equipment information to the vehicle information, wherein the computer-implemented method selects the rental equipment based on compatible attributes between the rental equipment information and vehicle information, and displaying the compatible rental equipment on the website.

The Haynes reference does not teach or suggest the step of retrieving the vehicle information from the central database based on the description of the vehicle. In Haynes, the vehicle information is supplied by the user, see paragraph [0059]. In contrast, the present invention receives a description of the vehicle and then retrieves the vehicle information that will

actually be used in the computer-implemented comparison with the rental equipment information. The present invention requires significantly less hard technical information from the user.

The Haynes reference further does not teach or suggest the step of searching the central database based on the vehicle information retrieved from the central database to identify rental equipment which is compatible with the vehicle by a computer-implemented comparison of the rental equipment information to the vehicle information. The computer-implemented method selects the rental equipment based on compatible attributes between the rental equipment information and vehicle information. Haynes requires the user to select both the truck and rental equipment. Haynes then does a table lookup to see if the selected items are compatible.

In contrast to the Haynes reference, the present invention simplifies the rental process for the user by asking only for a basic description of the tow vehicle. The computer-implemented method then assumes the task of searching the central database based on the description of the vehicle to identify rental equipment in the central database which is compatible with the vehicle as specified by the user. The compatibility is determined by a computer-implemented comparison of the rental equipment information to the vehicle information. The computer-implemented method selects the rental equipment based on compatible attributes between the rental equipment information and vehicle information. As described in the specification, those attributes include consideration of the height of the vehicle and hitch assembly, length and width of the vehicle, weight ratio, electrical wiring harness, ground clearance,

engine size, drive configuration, wheel base, and towing capacity, see paragraph [00027]. Haynes has no such feature.

The Kolls reference does not address the shortcomings of the Haynes reference to render claim 21 obvious. Therefore, claim 21 is believed to patentably distinguish over the Haynes and Kolls references, taken singularly or in combination. Claims 22-24 are believed to be in condition for allowance as each is dependent from an allowable base claim.

Applicant has amended claim 25 to recite a computer system comprising means for storing vehicle information and equipment information in a central database, means for providing a website, means for receiving a description of a vehicle, means for retrieving the vehicle information from the central database based on the description of the vehicle, means for searching the central database based on the vehicle information retrieved from the central database to identify rental equipment in the central database which is compatible with the vehicle as determined by a computer-implemented comparison of the rental equipment to the vehicle information, wherein the computer-implemented method selects the rental equipment based on compatible attributes between the rental equipment information and vehicle information, and means for displaying the compatible rental equipment on the website.

For the reasons given above, the Haynes reference does not teach or suggest means for retrieving the vehicle information from the central database based on the description of the vehicle.

For the reasons given above, the Haynes reference further does not teach or suggest means for searching the central database based on the vehicle information retrieved from the

central database to identify rental equipment in the central database which is compatible with the vehicle as determined by a computer-implemented comparison of the rental equipment to the vehicle information. The computer-implemented method selects the rental equipment based on compatible attributes between the rental equipment information and vehicle information. Haynes has no such feature.

The Kolls reference does not address the shortcomings of the Haynes reference to render claim 25 obvious. Therefore, claim 25 is believed to patentably distinguish over the Haynes and Kolls references, taken singularly or in combination. Claims 26-29 are believed to be in condition for allowance as each is dependent from an allowable base claim.

Applicant has amended claim 30 to recite a mass storage device comprising means for storing vehicle information and equipment information in a central database, means for providing a website, means for receiving a description of a vehicle, means for retrieving the vehicle information from the central database based on the description of the vehicle, means for searching the central database based on the vehicle information retrieved from the central database to identify rental equipment in the central database which is compatible with the vehicle as determined by a computer-implemented comparison of the rental equipment to the vehicle information, wherein the computer-implemented method selects the rental equipment based on compatible attributes between the rental equipment information and vehicle information, and means for displaying the compatible rental equipment on the website.

For the reasons given above, the Haynes reference does not teach or suggest means for retrieving the vehicle information

from the central database based on the description of the vehicle.

For the reasons given above, the Haynes reference further does not teach or suggest means for searching the central database based on the vehicle information retrieved from the central database to identify rental equipment in the central database which is compatible with the vehicle as determined by a computer-implemented comparison of the rental equipment to the vehicle information. The computer-implemented method selects the rental equipment based on compatible attributes between the rental equipment information and vehicle information. Haynes has no such feature.

The Kolls reference does not address the shortcomings of the Haynes reference to render claim 30 obvious. Therefore, claim 30 is believed to patentably distinguish over the Haynes and Kolls references, taken singularly or in combination. Claim 31 is believed to be in condition for allowance as it is dependent from an allowable base claim.

Applicant(s) believe that all information and requirements for the application have been provided to the USPTO. If there are matters that can be discussed by telephone to further the prosecution of the Application, Applicant(s) invite the Examiner to call the undersigned attorney at the Examiner's convenience.

Application Serial No.: 10/674,934
Long, Mark C.
Response to Office Action mailed April 10, 2006

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees
due with this Response to U.S. PTO Account No. 17-0055.

Respectfully submitted,
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